



COMMUNITY TREE LIGHTS UP THE LEYS

FOR the first time in 57 years, the Leys has its very own community Christmas tree. Hundreds of people from Blackbird Leys witnessed the big switch on and enjoyed visiting the market stalls, and listening to the brilliant children's choir drawn from Windale, Orchard Meadow and Pegasus schools as part of a special event. The lights were turned on by Cllr Rae Humberstone, Lord Mayor of Oxford and The Blackbird Leys Choir sang carols before people enjoyed mince pies and mulled wine.

The evening was a great community event with lots of

residents contributing to its success. Delteys contributed £500 and others including Buildbase and Catalyst generously contributed to the Christmas tree.

Reverend Heather Carter said: "I can't tell you how privileged it felt to be a part of Blackbird Leys's first community Christmas tree. It was an event that started as a 'gift' from Deltey's and ended as a whole community event. So many people worked very hard to bring the event together. Let's hope it grows in momentum from year to year."

Smiles, lights and lanterns all round!



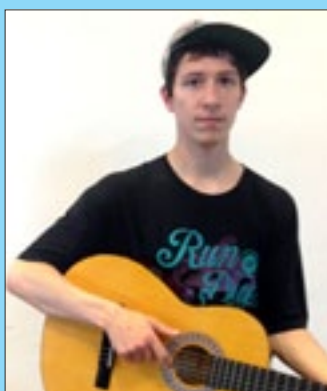
Oxford celebrates another magnificent Light Night Festival.
Photo by Jenny Aston.

MORE than 50,000 people visited Oxford city centre to enjoy the annual Christmas Light Festival. The event included a lantern procession with 180 local primary school children, a Christmas market, art installations, music and projections at Oxford Ice Rink. One of the highlights was a series of light projections on the Clarendon Building called Re:action by artist Dan Shorten of Anomic Multimedia.

For more about the Oxford Christmas Light Festival, turn to page 8.



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Christmas all wrapped up!
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EDITOR'S LETTER

HELLO,

Are you all ready for Christmas? For most of us who are juggling dozens of different things all the time, the festive season can be fraught with stress and worry and ultimately exhaustion as we collapse in a heap on Boxing Day!

If you are trying to manage work, study, volunteering and family life at the moment then all I can say is Keep Calm-It's Only Christmas! For what amounts to just a couple of days of celebration for most people, the hard work that goes on in the run up to Christmas Day can be off the scale and leave even the most organised Christmas Elves frazzled!

So my message this month is simple, first of all if you are busy working away in the background trying to create the perfect Christmas STOP now!

Perfect doesn't really happen and putting yourself under pressure to try and make sure everything is just so, will just exhaust you. Instead, get everyone on board to help out and take the pressure off.

Try and remember what this time of year is all about and instead of rushing round the shops making impulse purchases because you think you should, take time out to look at the bigger picture. Spend time with people rather than money and try and have a rest and relax. If you are still hunting for gift ideas then don't break the bank-we have some great ideas in our Christmas supplement that might give you some inspiration!

Above all, we all wish you a very happy and stress free festive season and a successful, peaceful and healthy New Year!

Best wishes from all of us at Leys News and the Community Media Group.

Best wishes
Sarah



FESTIVE DRAWING BY SHAZIA HABIB, AGE 6, FROM GREATER LEYS. Send us your drawings/paintings for a chance to see your artwork in the next issue of Leys News. The creators of any pictures shown will receive a prize. Please include your name and address. If under 16, please include your age and name of a parent or guardian.

Leys News

ISSUE 135 DECEMBER 2015

Leys News is an independent newspaper and a social enterprise. It is owned by Leys News Limited, is part of the Community Media Group, and is funded through a mixture of grants and advertising revenue. It is delivered free to homes and businesses across the Leys. Leys News is produced by a team of volunteers who attend free Community Journalism Training courses.

If you would like to volunteer as part of our team and help to produce your local, independent newspaper please email the editor (details below) for more information and an informal chat about how you can help.

CONTACT

Address: Leys News, 26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX (Vehicle access via Jack Argent Close)

Phone: 01865 711756

Editor: editor@leysnews.co.uk

Advertising: advertising@leysnews.co.uk

Website: www.leysnews.co.uk

WHO'S WHO

Board of Directors: Sasha East (chair), Teresa Fieldwick, Ines Kretzschmar, David Potter.

Editor: Sarah Edwards

Business Manager: John Charlton

Design: Julian Dourado

Distribution Manager: Lorraine Heritage

Volunteers: Janet Pavelin, Trio Watson, Beth Speich

Contributions by: Jasmine Beaney, Richard Chidwick, Lauraine Dineen, Stella Gathenya, Natalie Gidley, Stuart Mabbutt, Meghan McCauley, Russell Price, Beth Speich and Jane Yates.

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YOUR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Gordon Roper. **Vice Chair:** Ann Booker.

Non-position holders: Peter Carter, John Dillon, Chris Hatton, Daniel Jones and Pat Stannard.

For further details telephone 07754 271831 (9am–5pm, Monday to Friday). Email bblparishcouncil@gmail.com

Also check leysonline.net to find out about Parish Council Meetings.

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

BLACKBIRD LEYS WARD

Linda Smith – Labour. 125 Oxford Road, Old Marston, Oxford, OX3 0RB

☎ 07961 121704 E: clrlsmith@oxford.gov.uk

Rae Humberstone – Labour. 75 Little Bury, Greater Leys, OX4 7UZ

☎ 01865 779678 & 07768 429566

E: clrrhumberstone@oxford.gov.uk

NORTHFIELD BROOK WARD

Sian Taylor – Labour. 5 Regent Street, Oxford, OX4 1QU

☎ 07767 311425 E: clrstaylor@oxford.gov.uk

Jennifer Pegg – Labour

☎ 07525 720599 E: cljrpegg@oxford.gov.uk

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

LEYS DIVISION

Steve Curran – Labour. 88 Fairacres Road, Oxford, OX4 1TG

☎ 01865 727824 & 07941 785538

E: stephen.curran@oxfordshire.gov.uk

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Andrew Smith – Labour. Unit A, Bishops Mews, Transport Way, Oxford.

☎ 01865 595790 E: andrewsmith.mp@virgin.net

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Elliot Vanderhyde.

Performing arts group set up in Blackbird Leys

By Richard Chidwick

BLACKBIRD Leys musician and performer Elliot Vanderhyde is set to launch his own record label and community group. The Young record label launcher, poet and performer is starting to turn heads with his live performances and innovative new project in Oxford. Elliot, 23, plans to set up a band and record label called Vanderhyde music and through this help improve the lives of young people everywhere and bring the community together.

Elliot said: "I set up the Vanderhyde Project to promote myself. I'm working very closely with young people. It's only me that set it up, and there is a community aspect so that we can engage with people and train them."

Elliot added: "When I became a christian I was prompted to make songs and most of these have not included Christian doctrine or work. I have been promoting records to people and I hope to inspire them. I'm rehearsing at the moment, and heard it's good to have one good concert a month."

Elliot grew up in Blackbird Leys where there are lots of projects for people aged between 16 and 25 and this is the age group Elliot wants to help. These groups include BG rec-ords Master Classes, Modern Art Oxford and the Ark T Centre and YWMP who have been important for Elliot's recent performance with poet and performer Lemn Sissay who recently starred on Desert Island Discs on BBC Radio 4.

Elliot said: "Hopefully I will be able to

write some good tunes for them."

Elliot said: "I am inspired by Nirvana, the Sex Pistols, Foo Fighters and Tribe Called Quest I have been told I have an Indie sound, I've recorded a track called 'Sugar'."

Elliot added: "I find it really energising coming up here and performing with my mates from the CDI; it really is a community project. We have some support on our website and a 500 strong mailing list of which we send fortnightly bulletins which platforms our proud-est features."

Elliot added: "We are enthusiastic about doing music, public speaking and writing through promotional events, artist and repertoire (A and R), recording and workshops. On a budget of crowd funds, which work by asking people to donate and help our cause at their discretion. The Vanderhyde group will work voluntarily as a team to post flyers and spread the word. We own equipment for musicians to record and practice for performing at events. We feel ready to discover just as much as we hope we can give to the artists we reach."

Elliot also takes part in many local groups where he performs his music and poetry. Next door to CDI, Blackbird Leys Community Centre is the Holy Family church where the group meet on Sundays. Events have so far been held at Old Fire Station Theatre, the New Baptist Church in the City Centre, the Jericho Tavern and on the streets of Oxford.

**W: vanderhyde.bandcamp.com
T: 07469 646921**

Trees need attention

A LOCAL city councillor is calling for trees in Blackbird Leys to be kept under control.

City Councillor for Blackbird Leys, Linda Smith will ask the council's executive board to look at the problem and see what can be done to mitigate the problem and improve the quality of life for the affected tenants and residents on the estate.

Cllr Smith said: "Our Tree Management policy dictates that reactive tree work is not carried out to address overhang branches or leaf and bird drop, no matter how many representations are received from residents or the local councillors on their behalf. Reactive tree works are only carried out if they are judged to be necessary on health and safety grounds. While I understand the budgetary pressures which have resulted in the formulation of this policy, I also believe that the particular situation in Blackbird Leys merits attention."

She added: "Many of the trees which are causing a nuisance were planted when the estate was built in the 1950s and have not had works carried out to



them since. There are cases where the mature trees loom over two storey terraced houses blocking out light from all the front rooms for most of the year. There are also car parking spaces on the estate, including sites newly installed under our Great Estates program, which are unusable because of the deluge of organic matter from overhanging trees at certain times of the year."

Cllr Smith added that many

of the problem trees are not street trees but are growing on some of the green amenity space between buildings, the patches of grass around which many homes on the estate are built.

She said: "The council has an additional responsibility as the landlord to look after these spaces as part of its estate management programme and I hope that Housing Services will work with the Parks Department to agree a course of action."

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Dear Father Christmas



BACK by popular demand, this year's festive treat at The Burton Taylor Theatre is Dear Father Christmas.

Written and directed by Helen Eastman, the play tells the story of how everything goes wrong for Father Christmas. Presents are muddled, a sack of letters has gone astray, the elves are in a panic and the North Pole Polar Bear has gone missing.

■ **Dear Father Christmas** runs until January 3. Tickets are £8 and £6. Ring 01865 305305 to book tickets and for performance times.



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For Parish Council information please call 01865 716943 or go to www.leysonline.net



Clare Ellis, trainee at Aspire Oxford.

Homeless charities launch joint Christmas Appeal

OXFORD homeless charities Aspire Oxford and Oxford Homeless Pathways have launched an appeal for donations to support homeless people in Oxford this Christmas.

Hundreds of local people in Oxfordshire will wake up without a home on Christmas Day. Aspire and Oxford Homeless Pathways support homeless people into safe housing and secure employment so that they can leave homelessness behind.

Paul Roberts, Chief Operating Officer of Aspire and Lesley Dewhurst, Chief Executive of Oxford Homeless

Pathways, said: "Christmas is supposed to be a time of celebration and joy, but the reality is that for homeless people in our city it's just another day when they will wake up on the streets or in unsafe accommodation. We've launched a joint Christmas Appeal to support homeless people in our city, not just to give them immediate shelter and hot food on Christmas Day but to offer them longer term skills, training and employment support so that they never have to be homeless again.

"A gift of just £10 could transform Christmas for homeless people in

our city, not just for this year but for future years too. Whether you make a donation, organise a church collection or do a cake sale with friends, every penny raised will support our vital work locally with homeless people in Oxford."

Aspire Oxford trainee Clare Ellis became homeless with her two sons after fleeing domestic abuse: "One of the hardest things about being homeless at Christmas was not having our most special possessions with us, like my two sons' homemade Christmas decorations. I felt so much failure as a parent, shame for our situation and fear for our future.

"But thanks to the support of charities like Aspire and Oxford Homeless Pathways, this year I'm looking forward to Christmas in my own home. I'm so excited that the Christmas decorations are already up! Please support Aspire and Oxford Homeless Pathways this Christmas on behalf of everyone in Oxfordshire who doesn't have a safe, warm home."

■ **To find out more and donate online, please use the link: <https://campaign.justgiving.com/charity/aspireoxfordshire/giftofhope>**

■ **Or call Aspire Oxford on 01865 204450 or Oxford Homeless Pathways on 01865 304614 to make a donation.**



THE WILDLIFE GARDEN

With **Stuart Mabbutt**

Prepare your wildlife garden for winter

GARDENS can appear dull in winter, yet as well as providing habitats for a host of overwintering wildlife; a good winter wildlife garden will attract ample species of birds.

Natural foods for birds often look attractive – brightly-coloured berries, windfall apples, ivy berries and the architectural seeds of teasels are ideal. Small tortoiseshell butterflies hide in sheds during winter. Try to avoid disturbing them.

Ladybirds gather in large groups during winter on dead plant stems, particularly in more

sheltered areas. Dragonfly larvae are active often for most of the winter, so always clean your pond with care. They are wonderful predators for what many call pests in a garden.

People tend to tidy their gardens in autumn; it's easy though to take it to the extreme. Help wildlife by leaving tidying up until the end of winter.

Spread fallen leaves over your flowerbeds, they create a foraging habitat for thrushes and blackbirds in winter. Frogs and invertebrates also like to overwinter among leaves. Don't cut back ivy growing on walls and fences until March so the berries are available and to act as a foraging habitat for insect-eaters such as tits.

Put a few clay roof tiles in your pond to provide cover for frogs and other aquatic wildlife.

It is a giant jigsaw this wildlife gardening lark, see how many pieces of the jigsaw you can put together in your garden this winter.

Happy Gardening

Blackbird Leys Parish Council

Next Meeting Date:

**Tuesday 26 January 2016, 7pm,
in the Jack Argent Room, BBL Community Centre.**

Parish Councillors

Gordon Roper (*Chair*), Ann Booker (*Vice Chair*), Peter Carter, John Dillon, Chris Hatton, Daniel Jones and Pat Stannard.

For further details telephone
07754 271831 (9am–5pm)

Send email to
bblparishcouncil@gmail.com



For further details of Parish Council news, meetings, minutes and other activities in Blackbird Leys please go to the community website:

www.blackbirdleysparishcouncil.gov.uk

Blackbird Leys Parish Council GRANT APPLICATIONS

Blackbird Leys Parish Council provides grants to local worthy community groups. The grants are awarded in January and June each year and those applying will need to do a short five minute presentation to the council as well as fill in an application form.

The next deadline for applications is Wednesday 8 January 2016.

For a copy of the application form visit: www.blackbirdleysparishcouncil.gov.uk or email bblparishcouncil@gmail.com

HOT OFF THE PRESS!

VOLUNTEERS from newspapers produced by the Community Media Group and tenants and volunteers from the Soha Housing Association, had the chance to see a printing press in action during a visit to the Newbury News.

The ten volunteers are all contributors to newspapers that are produced by CMG (Community Media Group) including Soha's publication The Tenants' Times- a quarterly newspaper for housing association tenants.

Most of the community newspapers produced by CMG are printed at Newbury, and the visit gave volunteer community journalists the chance to find out more about how their newspapers are printed, and to see the press in action.

Maria Paz Moreno, who writes for Leys News, said: "We had a great day at Newbury and the staff there were really welcoming. They answered all our questions and really took time to explain things to us. We all learned a lot. It was very informative and interesting."

Julie Ball and Emma Crees
(front row)
Liz Roberts, John Smelt,
Richard Chidwick, Sadie
Quinton, Stella Gathenya,
Phill Andrews, Maria Paz
Moreno, Edwina Lamond.



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Top tips for a fabulous Christmas

By Jane Yates

CHRISTMAS is a time for giving, and you can't beat a homemade gift or card.

Cookie jar kits are easy to make and require little skill.

Layer the ingredients for your favourite cookies in a jar. Handwrite the ingredients and cooking instructions on a homemade label made from an old Christmas cards cut into shapes. If your budget allows ties a festive cookie cutter onto the jar with tartan ribbon.

Other ideas that take a bit more time and forward planning include sloe gin or homemade chutney, but this year I am going to be trying my hand at making homemade chocolates and sweets.

If you have any children get them to draw a Christmas



design for your card. Scan or photocopy it then stick it to blank cards. You could also make your own Christmas crackers. This way you can personalise them. Use cardboard tubes and bright crepe paper. Add some jokes, sweets and small gifts.

If you are very crafty then knit

or buy matching woolly hats for the after Christmas day meal walk to the pub or out with the dog. This was something I did last year. I got pixie hats with bells on. Everyone wore them and I wanted to save them for this Christmas but my daughter told me her dog ate them!

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My work experience with Leys News

By **Jasmine Beaney**

THROUGHOUT childhood and teen years, you are constantly asked by adults what you want to be when you are older. For me, I have never had a specific answer and up until now I have been clueless.

I am in the last year of taking my GCSE's at The Marlborough School, Woodstock. It is coming towards the point now where I need to make some decisions. College? A-levels? Even university? Every year 11 will, or have done a work experience for a week, as a chance to get an insight into the working world for adults, and what potentially your future career could be like. My work experience placement was at Leys News, a community group located in Oxford.

There are many reasons why I had chosen to work at Leys News. Firstly, the location was ideal as I had easy transport to the offices and is not far away from me at all. My family and I are also very good friends with Sarah, the

group editor for Leys News, who I also know has very much experience in the media industry. The most important reason is I have a very strong interest in media, and need as much early experience and knowledge as I can get.

I can thoroughly say that I had a great time working with Leys News. As I entered the building on my first day, I was greeted by all the workers who introduced themselves and their job roles, and was welcomed with a warm cup of tea.

My first and favourite task of the week was creating a fashion blog for the spring season in 2016 to feature in the New Year's paper. As I already have an interest in arts and fashion, this was very enjoyable for me as I have never had a chance to actually write about it and to give my own opinion for other people to read.

Researching the London and New York cat walk clothing and trying to find similar clothing in high street shops inspired me, and helped me to understand where and how the high

streets get their inspiration from for their clothing.

I was also given the task of proof reading. This is where you read through articles in the newspaper before they are published and to spot any spelling or punctuation mistakes. At Leys News, volunteers come in and help with the proof reading to ensure that everything has been checked. I really enjoyed this as it brought a lot of people together, and enabled me to meet a wide variety of very interesting and lovely people throughout my week of work experience.

Not only did I engage with new people, the proof reading also helped my own spelling and punctuation as I was learning from other people's mistakes. I think that it is very important that you are still learning and teaching yourself as much as you can while on work experience.

I had no problems while working with Leys News and have nothing negative to say about it. From my week with them, I've created, engaged, learnt, socialised and most importantly, I now have a clearer insight to what I would like to do with my future and how I'm going to get there.

A big thank you to Leys News and the team for making my work experience special, and for also helping me to choose my path.

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VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Thank you to all everyone who has supported us this year and for making our community newspapers such a success.

The next deadline for editorial content for the first issue of Leys News for 2016 is 10 January and the advertising deadline is 19 January.

MEG'S TEEN CORNER

By Meghan McCauley

Family gatherings

CHRISTMAS is the time of year for family. Parties, presents, overly rich food that makes you feel ill – it's all part of the fun. Judging by what I've overheard in the corridors at school, it's a time for teenagers to be 'forced' into hanging out with their 'uncool' relatives, who they secretly like but are too cool to admit that.

However, as someone who lives in a different country to my relatives, family Christmas isn't always an option, and so general family gatherings are often interesting.

For instance, the last time I saw my cousins was at one of their 21st birthday parties, and apart from being a great night for him (who doesn't love being surrounded by a hundred friends who all just gave you overly expensive drinks as gifts and then proceeded to drink it themselves?) it was also an opportunity for the family to get together.

Middle aged relatives mixed with masses of drunk friends can be interesting, especially when said drunk friends begin playing 'rack city', and to see your aunt try and converse with a highly intoxicated twenty year old is quite a sight to say the least – obviously only after every relative you see asks how old you are.

Generally they were quite a way off – 'how old are you now, 17? 16? What, only 14? Gosh, you look old for your



age. She's going to break hearts, this one' – and then there's detailed inquisition about hobbies; I've found that when you see a relative only about every six months or so, they tend to have a lot of questions for you.

Many adults also seem to have an odd habit of being highly interested in exams – once they found out I had no big exams in the next few months, they seemed to abruptly lose interest in the conversation. Oh, and the fact that I'm not sure of my career seems to be a big deal, as they reassure me I'll figure it out in time, as if we didn't just spend half an hour establishing the fact that yes, I am in my fourth year of secondary school, and no, I haven't done my exams yet, and you're right, I am very young with all my best years right around the corner.

And yet there's always the shock of how good some of your relatives are at dancing after a drink or two, and the horror of them trying to convince you to join them. Who wants to be upstaged by their dad at dancing to an Arctic Monkeys song? Not me, that's for sure.

On the whole though, of course I wouldn't change them. It's always fun to see parts of yourself in other people, and where would that be common other than in a place surrounded by people who have similar genetics to you? Plus, my aunt's chocolate cake is a killer. Is there something about aunts, where they just have to make delicious food and ask oddly specific questions about your life? Times like those, I really do love my family.

Racism and homophobia

RACISM and homophobia are massive problems – we all know that. There's constant media coverage of racist attacks and votes for gay marriage. People are interviewed about it, vote statistics are spread, but there's a massive gap in the opinions, and that is the opinions of teenagers.

As a straight, white teenager, I can honestly say that I have never been asked what I think about these issues. I could name maybe three people who truly know my opinion on racism. Why so few? Because no one ever asks.

At family parties or during significant referendums, adults are asked over and over what they think about the latest vote or 'that situation in that country', and teenagers are passed off as not caring. Many adults assume we are Facebook obsessed, mindless sloths with no real opinion about any real events.

The only questions I really get are 'How's school?' or 'What's your favourite boyband?' Perhaps because people assume that the real important things don't affect me, and in a way, they're right – gay marriage being legalised doesn't directly affect me and won't really make my everyday life much different, but the same can be said about many adults, and yet people still

MORE than 50,000 people enjoyed the multitude of events that took place across Oxford as part of this year's Christmas Light Festival.

Events ranged from a lantern procession featuring 180 children from eight Oxford primary schools, a Christmas Market, art installations throughout the city – from Pembroke College, to the Museum of Natural History, to the Plain Roundabout – and DJs and projections at Oxford Ice Rink.

The highlight for many was a series of spectacular light projections on the Clarendon Building in Broad Street. The show, called Re:action, was by artist Dan Shorten of Anomic Multimedia.

It is estimated that 15,000 people turned out to watch the lantern procession and light projections on Friday night, with a further 20,000 people visiting the Christmas Market on Saturday and Sunday. With cultural venues across Oxford hosting events, it is estimated that more than 50,000 people took part across the weekend.

The Christmas Light Festival was organised by Oxford City Council and Ian Nolan Events in partnership with Oxford's cultural organisations, on behalf of communities across the city.

The festival's lead sponsor was the University of Oxford, with additional sponsorship from the Westgate Shopping Centre. The lead funder was Oxford City Council, with additional funding from the Arts Council. The Christmas tree in Broad Street was sponsored by estate agent Connells.

Jack FM was this year's media partner and presenter Trev, from the Morning Glory show, compèred and entertained the crowds during the Friday evening festivities in Broad Street.

On top of this, the festival received a huge amount of support in-kind from cultural partners, which programmed and delivered activities and events as part of the weekend.

Councillor Bob Price, Oxford City Council Leader, said: "This year's Christmas Light Festival was undoubtedly the best ever.

"The sheer number of cultural organisations that took part and put on activities for Oxford's families was astonishing – it seemed wherever you turned in Oxford over the weekend there was something happening.

"The lantern procession clearly involved a large number of school children and the quality of the lanterns was higher than ever. This has confirmed the lantern parade as a key part of the festival for future years.

"This year's festivities point us towards a positive future for the Christmas Light Festival."

Rachel Capell, City Events Officer at Oxford City Council, said: "As always, it's been fantastic working with all our cultural partners and we're really pleased to have included so many outdoor activities and events in the festival this year. We



Christmas Lights Festival 2015 named the best ever as more than 50,000 people attend

hope to build on this success for next year."

Ian Nolan, director of Ian Nolan Events, said: "We are absolutely delighted with how well received the Christmas Light Festival was.

"More than 180 of the children we worked with attended the procession and were watched by 15,000 people lining the streets, while more than 10,000 people watched the Re:Action projections and a further 20,000 passed through the festive market.

"Oxford is a city that has inspired culture and creativity for hundreds of years. The Christmas Light Festival is about coming together and celebrating the wonderful mix of organisations and communities that make our city so great."

■ **Oxford City Council would love to hear feedback from those who attended this year's Christmas Light Festival. To contribute, please visit: www.oxfordschristmas.com/feedback.**



Photos by Jenny Aston.



REVIEW Journey Brings Young and Elderly to the Old Fire Station

By Richard Chidwick

THE Journey, a play including singing, dancing and a show case for the CDI (Community Development Initiative) and the Clock House took place at the Old Fire Station, Oxford on Tuesday 3 November.

The play included The Clock House, a group for The Elderly and the CDI which is a youth project. Both groups are from Blackbird Leys and joined together for this performance.

Rodney P wrote the play to include all ages and genders of performers from children to the elderly. Rodney P who is also known as 'Da Riddim Killer' is an English MC and rap-per. Rodney P has had one of the longest and most respected careers in UK hip hop.

Rodney P said: "I came up from London today to work with the CDI. I'm involved with Loads of community projects, I find it energising and rewarding. I've been coming up to Blackbird Leys for the last five years helping out at the CDI, and I've written the piece for this community project.

It's a project for all ages project by the community from the community for the community!"

Treasurer Neil Holman said: "We cover the whole of the

Leys really, CDI run this project and we work with young and old people, and today we're celebrating 20 years of the CDI. CDI has grown and changed shape to incorporate the Clock House Project for over 50s."

Member of the Clock House and performer Gloria Thomas said: "I joined Gardening Club after my husband died six years ago and joined a lot of activities during the way. I go once or twice a week to Clock House and I really enjoy it. The Clock House is for over 50s on Blackbird Leys, we do activities such as Yoga, Thai Chi and Gardening Club."

Speaking at the Annual General Meeting after the performance Rodney P said: "I wish I had something like this when I was growing up please support CDI in our cause!"

MUSIC REVIEW

Tree Top Flyers at the Bullingdon

Review by Richard Chidwick

THE Treetop Flyers played to a packed out Bullingdon Back Room, and in their lead singer's own words was "one of our best gigs to date!"

Songs from all three of their albums were skilfully backed by a harmony of vocals accompanying the stand out track Things Will Change as well as songs from their eagerly anticipated new album.

Treetop Flyers are a Folk Rock band based in London. They won the Glastonbury Festival Emerging Talent Competition 2011, releasing their debut album 'The Mountain Moves' both here and in the States in 2013.

Lead singer and guitarist Reid Morrison said "We've been signed for about five years now and it's been great so far, we've had a few changes along the way. It's always a bit more nerve wracking playing new stuff but it's also exciting."

The band opened the evening with Sleepless Nights and She's Gotta Run, before upping the tempo with tracks such as What Can You Do to really get the dancing going.

The band will hopefully be playing at Glastonbury festival this summer and let's hope it not too long before they visit OX4 again.



Oxford students raise almost £100,000 for British Heart Foundation

OXFORD'S students could have raised almost £100,000 for the British Heart Foundation after donating unwanted goods as they moved out for the summer The Moving Out Campaign saw red donation bins installed throughout the city by Oxford City Council, Oxford Brookes University and the University of Oxford.

Students used the bins to donate 7,042 bags of unwanted clothes, shoes, electrical items, books, DVDs, CDs and other items. The British Heart Foundation will now sell these items in their charity shops, which could raise as much as £99,288 for the charity.

The Moving Out Campaign has been running in Oxford

since 2012, when just 1,932 bags were donated. The British Heart Foundation has pioneered research into coronary heart disease, which is the UK's single biggest killer, to transform the lives of people living with heart and circulatory conditions.

Councillor John Tanner, Board Member for Climate Change and Cleaner, Greener Oxford, said: "The Moving Out Campaign shows how much money can be raised by donating items rather than just throwing them away for incineration. It is great to see the city and both our universities come together for two important causes: helping the British Heart Foundation and increasing recycling."

Julie Paffett, BHF regional stock generator, said: "We've been delighted with the response from students across Universities in Oxford and their overwhelming support. Each BHF shop needs to receive 400 bags of unwanted items a week and thanks to generous donations from the students and staff we have been able to help our shops in Oxford."

"Coronary heart disease is the UK's single biggest killer, shattering the lives of too many children, parents and grandparents – you can still join the fight for every heartbeat by having a clear out and donating your unwanted items to your local BHF shop."

CRAFT CORNER

How to make a drawstring gift-bag

By **Natalie Gidley**

THESE drawstring gift bags are so easy and quick to make and you don't have to be great at sewing. You can find pretty but cheap Christmas fabrics on eBay or in a local haberdashery at this time of year or choose a patterned fabric that your gift-receiver will love all year round. You will need:

- Scrap piece of fabric
- Thread
- Pins
- Ribbon
- Darning or large and a regular needle
- Fabric scissors
- Stitch unpick

If you are feeling particularly creative you might also find some pretty trimmings to add!

Step 1

Cut out a piece of fabric measuring 19.5cm x 19.5cm. 2.5cm will be your seam allowance for each side plus the drawstring tube around the top.

Step 2

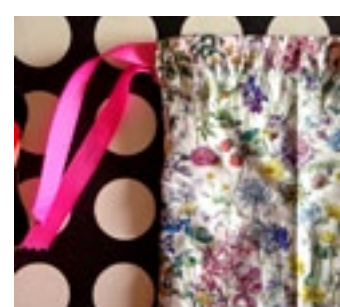
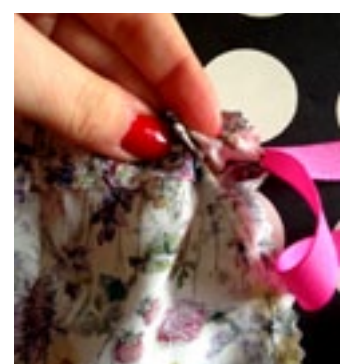
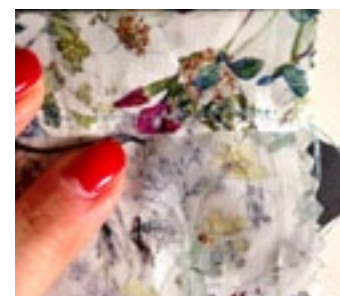
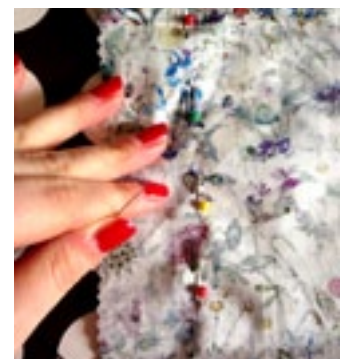
With the right side of the fabric facing down, fold over 2.5cm on both the top and bottom of the fabric. This will create the tube for your ribbon drawstring so make sure that there will be enough room for this to be fed through later. Pin and tack along the seam edge. Either hand stitch or sew the seam in place. Using a stitch unpick, take out the tacking stitches.

Step 3

With the right side of the fabric facing down, fold the rectangle of fabric in half so both of the ribbon seams meet evenly. Pin and tack 2.5cm along each side of the bag. Hand stitch or machine sew the side seams. The bag should be inside out. Unpick the tacking stitches.

Step 4

Cut two lengths of ribbon. I used a darning need because it is bigger than regular needles so easier to thread the ribbon through the top seams. Each length of ribbon needs to go through one top seam and then follow round through the other (see the picture in the



gallery). The other piece needs to do exactly the same in the other direction. You will end up with two strands of ribbon at each end which you can pull to close the bag.

Step 5.

Turn the bag inside out, straighten out the ribbons and iron.

If you want to make them for friends and family, have a think about their hobbies and interests. Make-up, travel beauty products and sample sachets are great for those who love a good pamper, stationery addicts will love sticker packs, novelty paper clips and little notebooks.

If you know someone who loves to sew; packs of pins, a wrist pin cushion, a thimble, thread and a measuring tape will go down well. Fill with chocolates or some home-made festive potpourri with dried orange slices, cinnamon sticks and star anise.

The great things about these bags is that they can be to any size. Bigger ones can be used as wash bags – if you're feeling confident, find a waterproof fabric to add as a lining – or simply use them as gift wrapping for bigger presents like pyjamas or slippers.

Christmas 2015

Holy Family Church



December

Sunday 13th 3pm Diocese of Oxford Deaf Carol Service (BSL interpreter.)

Sunday 20th 3pm Childrens Christmas Activity Service.

6.30pm Carols by Candlelight.

Christmas Eve 11.45pm
Carols and Midnight Communion

Christmas Day 10am
Family Christmas Communion

Christian Life Centre
presents

*Carol Service
on the green*

**20th December 2015
5 - 6pm**

Venue: Blackbirdleys Community Centre,
Blackbirdleys Road, Oxford, OX4 6HW

Attractions: *Mulled Wine, Mince Pies and
Father Christmas giving presents to all children.*

For further information:

Tel: 01865 772152

Mob: 07501 555053

Email: admin@btconnect.com

Web: www.christianlifecentreoxford.org.uk

Admission Free. All are welcome.



BLACKBIRD LEYS ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND (BLAP)

Spreading the light

BLAP works with children aged 8 – 13. When it gets dark you would expect the children and young people at BLAP to settle down to the many activities offered within the building. Instead for most of them, the darkness heralds the best part of the evening as they start playing "forty forty"

They have torches and run off to hide in and outside the building. The aim is to get back to base without being spotted.

BLAP will close for the Christmas holidays on 15 December and will re-open on 5 January.

Sue Price said: "We will also be trialling a new venture, and will open on 18 January for the whole day as the local schools are closed for an INSET day."

■ Please phone BLAP to book your place on 01865 236646



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LEYS CDI DINNER

Christmas

25TH DECEMBER 2015

NO ONE NEEDS TO BE ALONE THIS CHRISTMAS

The Leys Community Development Initiative (CDI) is planning a Christmas day event for the Community. CDI has identified that for some people this time of year can be very stressful, for many it maybe the loneliest day of the year we feel that no one should spend it alone Christmas is meant to be a time of happiness and sharing and CDI would like to bring a little of that festive cheer to those who don't have no one to share Christmas with. Dine-in, and home delivery (for the elderly) are available.

TO PLACE AN ORDER FOR HOME DELIVERY PLEASE CALL 01865 395 927 FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

Would you like to help?
Are you able prepare part of the meal, deliver meals, help set up/clean up, serve, greet people at the door, etc.?
If you would like to volunteer or contribute in some way, please call 01865 395927

25TH DECEMBER
12PM - 6PM



@ CDI. Blackbird Leys Community Centre
Blackbird Leys. Oxford. OX4 6HW

Every week at The Leys Children's Centre

January and February 2016



MONDAYS

- **PEEP for Babies**
12.30pm–1.30pm. Contact Camille Kalaja 01865 773263
- **The Listening Centre**
5.30pm–9pm. Phone 01865 794794

THURSDAYS

- **Infant Feeding Talks**
For pregnant women
Second Thursday every month. 11am–12pm
To book an appointment with Camille Kalaja
phone 01865 773263

TUESDAYS

- **PEEP for Babies**
9.30am–10.30am
- **Stay and Play with lunch**
(small fee) 11am–1.30pm
Includes:
 - **Job Club**
Every other Tuesday
9.30am–1pm
Contact the Leys Children's Centre
or Rosa 07931 400108
- **Speech and Language Drop In**
11.30am–12.30pm
- **Lone Parent Advisor**
Last Tuesday of month
(please phone for an appointment)
9.40am–3.40pm
- **The Listening Centre**
5.30pm–9pm

FRIDAYS

- **Oxford Family Mediation Drop-In**
9.30am–11.30am
- **Stay and Play with lunch**
(small fee) 11am–2pm

SATURDAYS (MONTHLY)

- **Dad's Group (First Saturday)**
10.30am–12.30pm
Contact Carla 01865 773263/07919298271
or Glen 01865 773263
- **Maluchy Group (Second Saturday)**
10.15am–11.45am
Contact Agata 07874 187704

Various courses are available during the week. For more information contact the Leys Children's Centre on 01865 779615/ 773263

WEDNESDAYS

- **Midwife Clinic**
For pregnant and feeding mums.
Post natal, baby checks, support
and advice 12.30pm–2.30pm
Phone for an appointment
01865 773263
- **The Breastfeeding Café**
12.30pm–2pm
Contact Camille Kalaja
- **New Baby Group**
For parents and children
birth to 12 months
1pm–2.30pm
Contact Mikko Enticknap

WINDALE

- **Stay and Play**
Monday, 9am–11am
Thursday, 1pm–3pm
- **Time for Toddlers**
Thursday, 9.30am–11am
Contact Catherine Westbury-Cook on 01865 773263

THE DOVECOTE

- **PEEP groups**
Monday and Wednesday, 9.30am–10.30am
Contact Peeple
- **Twin Time**
Every second Friday, 10am–11am
Contact Camille 07920 084505
or Teresa 07901 331756

LEYS HEALTH CENTRE

- **Baby Massage**
Tuesday
For babies from eight weeks
old on the Leys. Contact Linda
Picton on 01865 788688
- **Baby PEEP**
Thursday
1.30pm–2.30pm
Contact PEEP

For information about all 'Peep' groups in the area contact Peeple 01865 395145

Thanks to Oxford Brookes University for sponsoring this page.

If you are interested in studying at Oxford Brookes please call Sobia Afridi on 01865 484826

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Time to Talk project returns to Greater Leys for special screening



A SPECIAL screening of Time to Talk: Digital Storytelling in the Leys, which is currently exhibited as part of the Museum of Oxford's '40 years, 40 objects' exhibition took place in Greater Leys for those who have contributed to the project.

The Time to Talk storytelling project was developed in the summer by Oxford Brookes University researcher Jeni Burnell, StoryWorks UK, the Museum of Oxford, Oxford City Council and Leys Community Development Initiative. Jeni with StoryWorks UK recorded local people's stories, past and present, to create a series of digital stories

that share the unique heritage and character of the estate. Each of the stories is approximately two –three minutes long and told in the first person. When combined with photographs and video footage, the stories share personal insights about people and their life experiences. By sharing these stories with others, Jeni hopes to better understand if creative arts projects can increase people's understanding of a neighbourhood.

Jeni, who works at the Centre for Development and Emergency Practice at Oxford Brookes, said: "Storytelling projects give people a chance to tell their story in their

own words. The stories shared in the Leys have been fascinating. Many of the people we spoke with have lived on the estate since it was built. They talk about working at the nearby Pressed Steel factory and of the estate's active social life including the 'Qualiday' events which took place at the Community Centre.

"It was a privilege to hear people's stories from the Leys and I am incredible grateful for the time and generosity of those who have contributed to the project."

The Time to Talk project will continue to be exhibited at the Museum of Oxford until February 2016 at the Oxford Town Hall.

OXFORD Brookes opened its doors to 150 Year 12 students from across Oxfordshire who are taking part in Brookes Engage.

Brookes Engage is an 18 month-long access programme that provides insight into studying and life at university.

The programme has been developed for students who come from backgrounds which are under-represented in higher education. Designed to support pupils to make a successful transition into university or further education, Brookes Engage will provide them with experiences that will develop skills and attributes that will be beneficial both in the world of study and employment.

Charlie Field, Project Manager for Brookes Engage said: "We want to provide students with an understanding of the industries they are interested in and give them access to high quality learning facilities and activities that will enrich their learning."

Students have chosen from a range of subjects to study throughout the programme including Social Sciences, Computer Technology, Healthcare, Education, Business (and related fields), History, Sport and Nutrition and Mathematics.

Charlie added: "This is a great opportunity for students, who might not have had the chance



Engage at Brookes

yet, to explore the opportunities available to them within higher education. We want to provide students with an understanding of the industries they are interested in and give them access to high quality learning facilities and activities that will enrich their learning. Oxford Brookes always aims to provide opportunities for participation in higher education to everyone who can benefit from it."

Participants will take part in a range of activities over the course of the programme during monthly sessions, engaging with academic staff, students and local employers, as well as taking part in cultural and educational trips. In addition to the monthly sessions, participants will

undertake an independent academic assignment with the support of a university tutor, attend a week-long summer school, and receive one-to-one mentoring from an Oxford Brookes student.

If graduates of the programme choose to study at Oxford Brookes, they will qualify to apply for the Brookes Community Scholarship of £1,000 in their first year. At the end of the programme, participants should feel confident in making the next step in their education career, be that in work or at university. The programme is completely free of charge to participants and bursaries for travel are available.

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☎ 01865 792037

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☎ 01865 240709

Acorn Nursery
Stadhampton, Oxford.
☎ 01865 891663
Oxford Garden Centres
South Hinksey, OX1 5AR.
☎ 01865 326066

Pathway Workshop
Dunnoch Way, OX4 7EF.
☎ 01865 714111

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Suthern-By-Pass, Oxford.
☎ 01865 326066

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154 Herschel Cres, OX4 3TY.
☎ 01865 242641

Safe Heating & Plumbing
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☎ 01865 772303

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WHAT'S ON IN THE LEYS

ADVICE

■ **Agnes Smith Advice Centre**
96 Blackbird Leys Road. Gives free
independent and impartial debt advice
and counselling.
Drop-in sessions: Mondays, 10am-12pm
and Fridays, 10am-12pm.
Also in the Farmhouse,
Tues and Thurs, 10am-12pm.
☎ 01865 770206

■ **Young People's Jobshop**
Every Wednesday, 1.30-3pm at the Early
Intervention Blackbird Leys Young People
Centre. Ages 16-19.
Speak to an advisor for FREE one-to-one
advice.

■ **Leys Job Club**
Free support for anyone who would like
help with learning or training, or would like
to consider a new job, or taking up work for
the first time.
Sessions are held at the Youth and
Community Centre every Wednesday from
10am-12pm. Just drop in.
Other job club sessions are held in the
Children's Centre, please call for details.
☎ Call or text, 0793 1400 108

CHILDREN

■ **New Baby Group**
Inc. **Breastfeeding Café**
Wednesdays, 1pm-2.30pm at Leys
Children's Centre, Cuddesdon Corner.
☎ Contact Mikko Enticknap for
Baby Group and Camille Kalaja for
Breastfeeding Café
01865 773263

■ **Blackbird Leys Youth Centre**
Blackbird Leys Road. Variety of activities
and advice for young people.
☎ 01865 772886.

■ **BLAP Afterschool Club**
Outdoor and indoor activities for yrs
8-13 in a structured environment.
3-5.30pm. £1.50 per session
☎ 07530933690 and 01865 236646
blap76@yahoo.co.uk

■ **Maluchy group**
For Polish speaking families with children
ages 0-5 years. Second Saturday in the
month, 10.15am-11.45am, at Children's
Centre, Cuddesdon Corner, Cuddesdon
Way.
☎ Agata, 07874 187 704

■ **Brownies**
Holy Family Church Hall.
☎ Jennifer Pleass, 07886 757338
bblbrownies@gmail.com
■ **35th Oxford Scout Group**
☎ Duncan Bowler,
0776 6293353

DOVECOTE AFTERSCHOOL CLUB
Runs Tuesday to Thursday, 3.30-
5.15pm, £1.30 per session.
☎ 01865 712299
and 07974 234661

■ **Oxfordshire (The Rifles)
Battalion Army Cadet Force**
Thursdays, 7.30-9.30pm at Sandy Lane
West. Boys and girls ages 13 to 18.
☎ 01869 259681

■ **Mother and Toddler Bounce**
Trampoline Sessions suitable for
mothers and toddlers held on
Thursdays, 10.30-11.30am. Blackbird
Leys Leisure Centre.
☎ Fiona, 07891 419793

■ **Strawbery Fayre Majorettes**
Training every Wednesday at the Barn
in Nightingale Avenue, Greater Leys,
6.30-8.45pm.
☎ Eleen Filer, 01865 717781

■ **Teenage Rounders Class**
Tuesdays, 4-5pm
£1.20. For 14-18 year olds Blackbird
Leys Leisure Centre

■ **Rainbows**
For girls aged 5-7 years.
Fridays during term time, 5.30-6.30pm,
at the Holy Family Church Hall on
Cuddesdon Way.
☎ Alexandra, 07804 500313

■ **Air Cadets**
Mon and Wed, 7.30-9.30pm,
Sandy Lane West.
Boys and girls aged 12½ to 20 years.
☎ 01865 777055
oc.2210@aircadets.org

EDUCATION

■ **Able Centre**
Cuddesdon Way. Free courses in Maths
and English.
☎ Nicky, 01865 7286

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Sat: 9.30am-12.30pm
Friday Closed.
☎ 01865 770403

LEISURE

■ **The Oxford Community Choir**
All welcome.
☎ Hannah, 07512 364367
hannahsings@gmail.com

■ **Irish dancing**
Sacred Heart Hall. Weds and Thurs, 5pm.

■ **Blackbird Leys Bowls Club**
Cuddesdon Way. The Club is looking
for new members. Open night every
Thursday from 6pm.

☎ David Buckwell, 01865 881735
or Gordon Roper, 01865 361047

■ **Girls Football (15+)**
Mondays, 6.30pm. FREE.
☎ Marc Fleckney, 07920 463623
Mafleckney@gmail.com

■ **Indoor Bowls Club**
Sandy Lane West. Club is looking for
new members and invites men, women,
boys and girls of all ages and abilities.
☎ 01865 775891
or email oxbowls1@yahoo.co.uk

LEYS POOLS AND LEISURE CENTRE

Opening Hours

Monday to Friday: 6am-10pm
Saturday: 6am-8pm
Sunday: 8am-8pm
Bank Holiday: 7am-8pm
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annamckay@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

■ **Monday & Friday Lunch Club**
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OX4 7WJ.
☎ Anne Appleton, 422231

■ **Over 60s Bingo Club**
Wednesdays 1-3pm
Blackbird Leys Bowls Club
☎ David Stonehill 01865 777074
or Anne Ranger 01865 430504



The Dystonia Society UK welcomes you to join us

Our meeting dates for Spring 2016 are as follows:
9 January 2016 and 16 March 2016 (AGM)

We meet in the Conference Room level 3, from 2pm until 5pm at The John Radcliffe Hospital,
Headley Way, Headington, Oxford. OX3 9DU.

For further information please contact Chairperson Lorraine Jackson.

☎ 0845 899 7134

(all calls are charged at 5p per minute plus your network rate)

E: info@dystonia.org.uk

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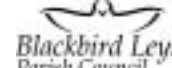
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■ Skiptrix Fitness Class

Get fit, tone and lose weight.
Thursdays, 6.30–7.15pm at the Ark T Centre, Cowley.
Saturdays, 10–10.45am at the Barn, BBLeys. £4 per class.
☎ Trish, 07957754355
trishwisdom@yahoo.co.uk

■ Yoga For All

Experienced Yoga teacher.
☎ Linda Highland, 01865 432570

■ ZUMBA Fitness Party

Tues, 6.30–7.30pm at The Oxford Academy School, Sandy Lane West.
☎ 07714 248177 zumbasarahoxford@gmail.com www.zumbasarahoxford.com

■ The Listening Centre

Counselling service based at Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre.
☎ 01865 794794

■ Oxfordshire Mind

Short courses, groups and other support are available for anyone with a mental health problem. To find out more drop in to the Cowley Wellbeing Centre in St James' Hall, 26 Between Towns Road.
☎ 01865 247788

■ Tai Chi & Qigong

Class every Thursday morning 9.45–10.45am. Ark T Centre, Crowell Road, Cowley. £5 and £6. First class half price.
☎ 07974185554

■ Rosewood Club

for people with dementia
Open weekdays, 9.30am–3pm. Providing a stimulating, enjoyable and social day while your family carer gets a well-earned break. £12 per day all inclusive, plus a transport charge if used.
☎ To arrange an informal visit call Julie Perks 749349 or email
rosewood@daybreak-oxford.org.uk

■ Survivors

Fridays and Saturdays, Blackbird Leys Community Centre, 9.30am–3pm.
A self-help group of people who use or have used Mental Health Services, working together to get support or to share experiences. Lunch available for £1.
☎ 07729 581975

NOTICES

SOCIALIST PARTY MEETING

Last Tuesday of every month at Leys Links Centre, Blackbird Leys Road.
Starts 7.30pm
☎ 0208 9888777

THE LEYS WI

Meets the first Wednesday of each month, 7.30–9.30pm, at The Clockhouse.
☎ Sue, 07786158229
E: theleyswi@yahoo.co.uk

LEYS COMMUNITY MARKET



The market is ideal for budding entrepreneurs, to sell home made goods like jars of delicious chutney, cakes, cards, soaps or jewellery, a place to develop a business.

For more details or to book a place please contact
leyscommunitymarket@yahoo.com
or Christine, 07914 395619

www.leyscommunitymarket.moonfruit.com/

BLACKBIRD LEYS COMMUNITY CENTRE

● Credit Union

Community financial service for savings and low cost loans
Opening Times: Mondays 11am–5pm, Tuesdays 7–7.30pm, Wednesdays 10am–1pm, Fridays 3–5pm
☎ 01865 718503

● Blackbird Leys Community Centre is a Wi-Fi Hotspot

To use the free Wi-Fi please select 'Oxford Free Wi-Fi'

● Early Intervention Service

Early intervention and specialist services for children, young people and families
☎ 01865 816202

● Home-Start

Family support charity for under 5s.
☎ 01865 779991

● Soundworks

Music studio and production

☎ 01865 401585

● IT HUB

IT Hub open access drop in sessions.
Tuesdays 12–3pm and Fridays 9am–12pm.

● Job Club

Wednesday 10am–12pm.
☎ 07931 400108

● Leys CDI Youth Project

After school programme (9–14 yrs) Mondays 3–7pm and Fridays 3–8pm.
Young Womens Group (9–15 yrs) Thursdays 4–7pm
Young Person's Career Support Thursdays 4–6pm
☎ 01865 395927

● LITZ

IT courses and trainings for all abilities. Course details available in the Centre reception.
☎ 01865 806453

JACK ARGENT ROOM

● Silver Circle Bingo

Tuesday afternoon, Bingo starts at 2pm.
☎ 01865 435954

● Golden Circle Bingo

Thursday afternoon, Bingo starts at 2pm.
☎ 01865 770626

● SR Oxford Survivors

Self-help community group for over 16s. Fridays and Saturdays, 10.30am–2.30pm
☎ Trish, 07824 644874

● Oxford Polish Association

Mondays twice per month, 6–9pm
☎ For dates contact Ewa, 07585 442696

● FriendLeys

Community coffee morning, £2.50, includes refreshments, Wednesdays, 10.30am–1pm
☎ 07810 047819

● Blackbird Leys Choir

New members always welcome. Wednesdays, 6.30pm–9pm
☎ 07775 945279

SPORTS HALL

● Boxing Club

Juniors and Seniors.
☎ For details contact Tony, 01865 432995

● Kick Boxing and Kung Fu

(Adults)
☎ 07909 121400

● GKR Karate

Children (five Years to Adults)
☎ Stuart, 07852 292255

● Kick Boxing & Self Defence

(seven to 18 years ONLY)
Tuesdays 4–5pm, Saturdays 12–1pm
☎ 07518 502920

ROOMS AVAILABLE FOR HIRE

IT Hub: 12 networked PCs with fast wired internet connection, ceiling mounted projector and air conditioning.

Sports Hall: Space for a wide range of activities.

Jack Argent Room: Seating for up to 60 people.

First Floor Meeting Room: For up to ten people.

For more details contact Jayne on 01865 402070

■ Blackbird Leys Community Centre
Blackbird Leys Road, Blackbird Leys, OX4 6HW
T: 01865 402070
E: blackbirdleyscommunitycentre@gmail.com

THE CLOCKHOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE

Our sessions are either low-cost or free, and all Leys over 50s are very welcome!

Dance for over 50s

Move around the floor, dance seated, or just watch and enjoy! NO partner or experience needed. Regular dances. Next ones at the Clockhouse: Monday 4 January: LINE DANCE, 11am–12pm; Monday 25 January: SAMBA, 11am–12pm. £2.

Healthy cookery on a budget for over 50s

We hope to arrange a morning workshop in February, where participants will cook and eat a delicious good-value meal together, in the Barn, Long Ground, Greater Leys. People with little or no cooking experience especially welcome. Please contact Leys CDI Clockhouse Project tel: 395908 for more details and to book your place. FREE

Yoga for over 50s

Seated/standing exercise, and relaxation. Great for better flexibility, balance and movement. Beginners welcome. Every Tuesday, starting 5 January 2016, 10–11am at the Clockhouse. £2.

Singing for fun for over 50s

Every Tuesday, starting 5 January 2016, 1.30–3.30pm. This group is currently full. Tel: 395908 to express an interest.

Crafts group for over 50s

Bring your own knitting, crochet, papercraft, or sewing and have a natter. £1. Every Wednesday starting 6 January 2016, 11am–12.30pm.

Tai chi for over 50s

Seated/standing exercise to help you get more supple, and boost energy. Every Thursday, starting 7 January 2016, 10–11am. £2.

Gardening club

Monthly meeting of SLIGO (Senior Leys Independent Gardening Organisation). Adults of ALL ages welcome. You don't have to be an active gardener. Next Club meeting: Thursday 7 January 2016, 2–4pm. Tel: 395908.

Art group for over-50s

Beginners welcome. Every second and fourth Thursday of the month, 2–4 pm, at Potters Court, Robin Place, Greater Leys,

Oxford OX4 7FF. On Thursday 14 January, local art tutor Grant Waters will be on hand with tips and help. On Thursday 28 January, "Do your own thing" with watercolours, acrylics or sketching. Sessions cost £1 including art materials. Tel: 395908 for more details.

Computer courses for over-50s

Learn at your own pace with the Clockhouse IT Project Group. Complete beginners welcome. FREE. You need to book. Tel: c/o 395908.

Evening socials

Join Clockhouse Activity Nights Group! Adults of all ages welcome. £2. Next meeting: Wednesday 27 January, 7–9pm. Tel: 01865 395908.

Community gardening

Adult volunteers of all ages needed, to help keep the Clockhouse garden looking beautiful in every season. Enjoy fresh air and good company, while doing something really positive for your local community. Tel: 395908.

Rosewood Club

Fun, sociable and stimulating days for people with dementia, and a break for their carers. £12 a day includes a hot two-course meal, plus a transport charge if used. Open each weekday. Tel: 749349 or email: rosewood@daybreak-oxford.org.uk for more details or to book an initial visit.

Over-50s advice

FREE monthly, confidential, advice at the Clockhouse (benefits, debt, housing, consumer issues), with an adviser from Agnes Smith Advice Centre. Next one: Monday 25 January 2016. Please book an appointment (tel: 395908): 10 am till 12 noon, or DROP IN from: 12–12.30 pm.

Monday tea-time social for over 50s

Tea-time social club for a friendly cup of tea and a chat. Scrabble and dominoes if you feel like a game – or just enjoy meeting and chatting with others! Every Mondays, starting 4 January 2016, 1.30–3.30pm. £1. Tel: 395908.

Age uk information drop-in

Regular monthly sessions at the Clockhouse. Next one: Monday 25 January, 1.30–3.30 pm. If you are over 50, or are supporting someone over 50, and need help, advice or information, please drop in for a chat with a friendly, experienced Age UK community information worker. FREE.

■ Long Ground, Greater Leys, OX4 7FX (look for the docks on the roof) ☎ 01865 395908 E: clockhousecdi@btconnect.com

LOCAL CHURCHES

■ Church of the Holy Family

Eucharist: Each Sunday, 10am, with children's activities.
Timeout: Reflective worship. Most Sundays, 6.30pm.
Church Office Hour: Mondays (except bank holidays) at 6.30–7.30pm. For enquiries, hall bookings, wedding arrangements.
Sunday 13 Dec, 3pm, Diocese of Oxford Deaf Carol Service (BSL interpreter.)
Sunday 20 Dec, 3pm, Childrens Christmas Activity Service. 6.30pm, Carols by Candlelight.
Christmas Eve, 11.45pm, Carols and Midnight Communion

Christmas Day, 10am, Family Christmas Communion
☎ Revd Heather Carter, 01865 778728 and Rev Adam Stevenson, 01865 714163
www.holyfamilybbl.co.uk

■ Redeem Christian Church of God

Meets at the Sacred Heart, Sawpit Road.
Sunday Service: 2.30–5pm
Bible study: Wednesdays: 6–8pm, except last Friday of month.
☎ 07825 679044 and 01865 766056
www.RCCGLighthouse.co.uk

■ Leys Community Church

Meets on Sunday, 11am at the Oxford Academy, Beecroft Room (includes special activities for children and young people).
☎ Andy and Nicci Longmore, 01865 779700,
www.leyscommunitychurch.org.uk

■ Chrisco Ministries

Meets at Jack Agent Room at the BBL Community Centre, Sundays, 11am–2pm
☎ 07533 845714 and 07737 564677

■ Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Balfour Road, Blackbird Leys.
Sunday Masses: 9.30am, with music and children's liturgy; and at 6pm.
☎ 01865 776903

■ Christian Harvest Ministries

Meets at the Jack Argent Room at BBL Community Centre, Sundays, 3–5.30pm.
☎ Rev Alice Kinyanjui, 01865 701129

■ Seventh Day Adventist Church

1A Chester St, off Iffley Road.
Saturday first service: 9.45–11am.
Second service: 11.15am–12.30pm.
www.freebible.org.uk

■ Mount Zion Ministries Oxford

Glow Hall, Blackbird Leys Community Centre.
Sunday Service: 11am–1.30pm.
All night prayers: Fridays, 7–9pm.
Bible Study: Sundays, 11am–12pm.
☎ Rev Chris Ugwu, 07877 536406, 07932 964056 and 07877 054600
Email: mtzionoxford@yahoo.co.uk
www.mtzionox.org

■ Kingsway International Christian Centre (Oxford branch)

Sunday service: 11am–1pm, children's church runs concurrently.
Friday Prayer Meeting: 6–7pm.
The Barn, Nightingale Avenue, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BU.
☎ 07951262426
admin@kiccoxford.org.uk
www.kiccoxford.org.uk

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LEYS NEWS FESTIVE SPECIAL

Christmas all wrapped up!





CHRISTMAS TOP TIPS

Leys News community journalists share their tips for a fabulous festive season.

Richard Chidwick



- Always wrap presents and gifts early and don't leave till last minute!
- Everything in moderation. Christmas can be a time of excess but be careful not to have too many mince pies... and Mulled Wine!
- Make sure Christmas lists are delivered early to avoid disappointment!

Beth Speich

- Don't feel pressured into going overboard on gifts/food/entertainment if it's too costly or too stressful, don't bother! You don't need to spend a lot of money to have a good time.
- If you have children, wrap everything! If you buy a set of cars or books for example, wrap them individually. Most of the fun is in the unwrapping!
- Make sure your phone or camera is fully charged and don't forget to take lots of photos!

Lauraine Dineen



- The build up to Christmas is just as important as the big day itself – Instead or as well as a advent calender I like to wrap up 24 books to read each night throughout December. I wrap up (in Christmas paper) their favourite books mixed with a couple of new books, the last book is of course is The Night before Christmas. Harry and George absolutely LOVE this and it certainly adds to the magic of Christmas.

- Christmas Morning – One of the greatest messes in the world in the mess in my front room on Christmas day, we do not tidy too quickly. We leave the toys out, help set them up and play with Harry and George because we know this is what they will remember as they grow older.
- Fun and Games – In the evening on Christmas day my family and I all sit around the table with drinks and nibbles and I do a quiz, questions can be about Christmas, funny facts and riddles. I always get tons of great questions from the internet. I get a lottery ticket or scratch-cards as a prize for the winners. The funniest part is probably the team names!

Spend less and de-stress How to have a relaxing festive season

By Sarah Edwards

THIS time of year is very busy – there is no getting away from it. I know that many of our readers will be juggling work, volunteering or studying with family, Christmas shopping and countless other tasks in the run up to the big day. The mere thought of trying to stay calm, keep an eye on the finances and make sure that nativity costumes are created, mince pies baked, Christmas cards duly written (and actually delivered) and gifts purchased and wrapped is enough to make anyone want to lie down in a dark room until it is all over.

So how can we do everything, keep everyone happy, tick all our lists AND have a happy, relaxing Christmas without worrying about the bills arriving in January?

I have learned, the hard way, that the Christmases we see portrayed in lifestyle magazines and on Instagram may look like our festive dream, but they are far from a true representation of a family Christmas.

You never see a slightly singed mince pie or undercooked turkey, or a pathetic attempt at last minute money saving craft project, or a picture of someone lying underneath a Christmas tree because once again it has fallen on top of them (yes, dear readers, that was me.)

So here are a few ideas to help you cope with the forthcoming festivities-while still

making time to actually enjoy yourself because believe it or not – we are ALL allowed to have a nice time!

Christmas shopping

Frankly this is a chore and not a pleasure- let's be brutally honest! You have to spend cash that you probably would rather not part with, and then you have to come up with original and witty gift ideas. Yes, you can start in January when the sales are on and many people I know do this very successfully, but if you prefer to spend January under a duvet you WILL be shopping in December.

My advice would be to NOT buy gifts for friends – instead save your money and arrange to have a bring and share lunch instead. If you really want to treat someone then offer babysitting, baking, ironing or dog walking services. These are luxuries and will always be welcome as well as very useful! If you are planning to hit the shops or the internet then check out our gift guides for some really good buys.

Feeding the five thousand?

Last year a good friend of mine described Christmas as like running a free café for the world's most demanding people – for free! He was in a food and drink coma for days. Getting together with friends and family is my favourite part of Christmas and New Year but it is exhausting if you are in charge of the catering. This year instead of buying presents for the adults in your family,

suggest that everyone contributes some food or drink AND a shift in the kitchen. It makes it much more fun if everyone does a little bit rather than leaving it all to one person who then collapses in a heap during the Eastenders Christmas special.

Captured by Christmas?

By Christmas Day at about 4pm I NEED to get out of the house and I am sure I am not alone! Even if it is tipping down with rain I have to get out for a walk with the dog and get some fresh air. This year don't stay stuck indoors for too long-hot, tired people get irritable with each other and then Christmas can become a battle ground. Suggest a brisk walk to burn off those lunchtime calories, clear your head and make room for the evening's treats and snacks.

Whatever you do this Christmas and whoever you spend it with, have a lovely time. Remember it is NOT about spending lots of money and getting stressed because you may not have enough Twiglets or feeling bad because you didn't have time to make your own mince pies. Christmas is a holiday season, a time to reflect and relax, so this year adopt a new approach and start 2016 feeling positive, relaxed and in control.



Monica's Motivational Moment

SO IT'S THAT time again. The season when we all start being thankful for having friends and family in our life.

The only time of year when people actually focus on being kind to others, smiling a

little more often as they walk around with the essence of Christmas cheer.

Some of us parents put our baking skills to the test, with homemade mince pies or jazzed up sausages... Yummy. While others may be racking their brains trying to decide who to buy for, or what to buy and worrying about how that turkey is going to fit into their oven! Many of us will be loving the cosy winter's nights tucked up on the sofa, lights dim. Indulging yourself with all the best festive films and reminiscing over the Christmas dinner.

One of the best things about Christmas is the smiles on the children's faces when they've finished decorating the Christmas tree and first switch on the fairy lights, and the look in their eyes when they realise that the star at the

very top, twinkles in the light.

Most of this society is very fortunate to have these things, family, friends, children and a loving home.

I know I am and most likely you are too. But always remember that someone out there needs to feel loved, even if it is just the little things like sparing a plate of food a hug even just words of wisdom.

All these things are priceless. So guys as we count down to 2016, let's open some new doors for the less fortunate.

Let's cleanse our hearts and our judgements, and let's enter this New Year with love peace and unity. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



By Beth Speich

CHRISTMAS is the one of the best times of the year to get crafty. It's even more fun with children, so I'm sharing a few ideas for Christmas cards or pictures you can make with your children – or of course just by yourself.

You don't need many materials to make these; you probably have most of them at home already.

1. Kissing reindeer card. How cute is this? As well as the card, you only need thumbs, paint and a pen. Paint

CRAFTY CHRISTMAS CARDS

a thumb brown and print it twice for each reindeer, then paint another thumb pink or red, and print it twice to make a heart shape. When dry you can draw on the details with a fine black pen.

2. Presents card. This is made using Hama beads (the ones you iron to fuse together). The possibilities are endless with these beads; I've chosen to share a pair

of little presents, but you could make many other festive objects. Simply make the shapes using the beads and board, and iron to fuse them together well. Then use either PVA glue or sticky pads to attach them to your card.

3. Christmas tree card. For this one you will need a sewing machine and thread. I think the effect is really

good, but it is quite simple to do. Lightly sketch the shape of a Christmas tree – or any other design – on to card, and use the zigzag stitch to fill in the shape. Make sure you open the card first so you don't sew it together!

Change colour for the trunk, tinsel and star. It doesn't have to be neat; I personally like the slightly shabby look. Finally my daughter glued on some gems that we had. had.but but you could decorate the tree with anything you have that you think is suitable.

15 Under £15: The fashion and beauty gift guide

- UNDER £5**
1. Mila Rose hair clip, £4 ASDA
 2. Koala socks, £5, Boux Avenue
 3. Heart photo frame, £4, Tiger
 4. Mug, £4.99, New Look
 5. Slippers, £4.99, M&M Direct

- UNDER £10**
6. Bronzing set, £7.99, Primark
 7. Terrier notebook, £5.99, Amy Brocklehurst at Graduate Collection
 8. 17 Easy on the Eyes makeup palette, £7.99, Boots
 9. Tartan scarf, £6.99, M&M Direct
 10. Bracelet, £8, Topshop

- UNDER £15**
11. Ice skaters tote bag, £12, Alex Foster at Talented
 12. Yoga DVD, £12.99, Amazon
 13. Letter cushion, £15 Marks and Spencer
 14. Necklace greetings card, £1 Topshop
 15. Reindeer pyjamas, £14, Florence and Fred at TESCO



Deck the halls!

IS YOUR tinsel looking a little shabby? Do your fairy lights resemble a ball of tangled wool? Well if your Christmas decorations are looking past their best, there are plenty of ways you can inject some festive style into your home this season without breaking the bank.

All the major supermarkets and high street shops have selections of really well priced Christmas decorations, and the nearer we inch towards the big day, the more chance you have of bagging some bargains and refreshing your decs at a fraction of the normal price.

For any of you who are crafty and clever with upcycling and re-purposing, then instead of throwing away anything that might be looking a little unloved, see if there is a way that it can be revitalised.

A dab of glue and some sequins or gems can give even the saddest-looking Christmas tree bauble a whole new lease of life! Get the children involved too and go crazy with card and glitter-it is Christmas after all!

Cut out Christmas-themed shapes and then either paint them or cover with scraps of paper. Finish off with glitter, sequins or any other sparkly adornments, make a hole at the top to thread some ribbon

through and hang on your tree.

If you don't have room for a traditional Christmas tree, choose some twigs from the garden or a small branch and paint it white. Before it is dry, sprinkle with glitter. Leave it to dry fully before putting the twigs in a vase and decorating with homemade biscuits, gingerbread or other decorations. A simple but impactful decoration is to use scraps of fabric or ribbon in coordinating colours and tie them onto the twigs in bows.

Don't forget to bring some greenery indoors during the festive season too. Look for the bargain bunches of flowers that supermarkets have in their reduced section and then arrange them with either sparkly twigs (as above) or lush and shiny holly, ivy and other greenery for a fabulous, fresh festive centre piece.

Gold decorations from Sainsbury's from £1.50

Happy Holidays decorations from Sainsbury's from £1.50

Honeycomb paper bell decorations from dotcomgiftshop.com £6.95

Paper chain kit from Dotcomgiftshop.com £6.95

Red decorations from Wilko

White wooden tree decoration from Wilko

Primark decorations from £2.50

Wilko Merry Christmas ribbon £1



By **Lauraine Dineen**

1 The Traditions

You know what parents really love about Christmas? Watching their children enjoy the same family traditions they enjoyed as a child. Whether its buying a new decoration each year in a shop decorated like a grotto, reading a new festive story each night in the build-up or leaving a carrot for Rudolf on the front door the night before, this will be the only way they will want to celebrate as they grow up. Whatever you do now and repeat every year will stay with them forever.

2 The Family Gathering

They may not be aware that their uncle just caught his flight with minutes to spare or that their Auntie was only there for a few hours before she had to go back to work for a night shift, but they will remember that the family gathered together. They will remember the house being full of people, they will remember sitting on their Nana's laps in Christmas pyjamas reading festive bedtime stories.

3 The Build-Up

Some-times the build-up is just as good as the big event. Your children will remember the magical, exciting few weeks before the big day, opening their calenders, going to watch

pantomimes, carol concerts, and meeting Father Christmas in his grotto. They will remember the excitement they felt as they did these things. For them, childhood Christmas memories will last a periods of weeks rather than one day.

4 Decorating The Tree

Memories of the tree going up, the smell of the dust as boxes of decorations are coming out of the loft, the star or angel being taken out of its box and placed on the tree, and having to untangle the lights before stringing them around the tree will stay with your children forever. This will be the official start of Christmas.

5 The Magic

Whether you create footprints on the carpets with flour, take a bite out of the mince pie you have left on the side, or sit with them at the window staring expectantly at the starry

sky before they go to bed, they will remember the magic you create over the Christmas period. Long past the days when they really believe in Father Christmas, they will remember the thrill of the time when they believed.

6 The Last Day Of Term

If your children are old enough to go to school, you will already know the excitement they will feel on that last day of term when lessons are not really lessons. In the future, they will remember those feelings on the last day of term, with their classmates, parties and a festive film. This will be the real starts of the festivities for them an they will come home bursting with excitement about the week ahead.

7 The Presents Under The Tree

In years to come, your children will not remember what they unwrapped at each Christmas. They will not recall when you have bought Christmas

presents on a budget or when you have the funds to splurge. They will remember the excitement of seeing gifts under the tree, knowing that they will get to open them soon. And they will remember the anticipation and excitement they felt ripping that paper off their presents long after they forget what was inside.

8 The Classic Films

They will remember and love the Christmas films they watched as children long into their adulthood. As the titles roll, memories will come flooding back of lazy days in front of the television playing with their new toys and working their way through treats from their stockings. As the years go on, new films will be released, but nothing will compare to the festive films they watched as a child with you.

9 The Act Of Giving

Of course the greatest joy of

Christmas is the act of giving – and your children will always remember handing out their Christmas cards, helping you to choose gifts for friends and family and the excitement of watching them unwrap.

As they get older and you allow them to choose gifts themselves, the excitement will grow even greater - and memories of what they gave will stay with them far more vividly then memories of what they received.

10 Christmas Morning

Nobody ever forgets the excitement of waking up on Christmas mornings while it is still dark, wondering if Father Christmas has been and discovering a tree packed full of surprises and a half eaten mince pie waiting on the plate.

They will remember the smell of pine needles and satsumas stuffed in their stockings, the sound of the kettle boiling as their parents desperately try to wake up after one too many sherries the night before, and the change in light as the sun starts to rise for the most exciting day of the entire year. And when they have children in years to come, they will rediscover this joy and excitement all over again as I have (with a strong coffee, naturally).

Ten things about Christmas your children will always remember